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SAMPLER

ANIMAL POETRY

Objective

Each student or group of students will be able to recognize and experience the inspirational value of wildlife.

Method

Students go outside to imagine themselves as animals, and then write poems.

Background

Poetry is an art form, accessible to every student in some way. A poem is an organized way of expressing insight through language. Meter and rhyme combine as one kind of poetry. People have others, including song and free verse.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to experience wildlife as the inspiration for a poem—and to successfully write the poem!

NOTE: This is an excellent companion to "Wild Words: A Journal-Making Activity."

Materials

writing materials

Procedure

1. Everyone can be a poet, at least to some extent—and yet lots of people think any kind of poetic expression is beyond their capacities. This activity is designed for every student—or group of students—to create a poem.
2. Go outside. Find a pleasant setting on the school grounds, in a park, wooded area, or other natural environment. Ask everyone to pick an animal to think about. Any animal is okay, although some should be wild animals. Ask everyone to close their eyes for a few minutes and imagine they are the animal, living in its natural environment. With their eyes closed, you can guide their imagining process with a few words—or simply leave this process to the students on their own.
3. Give everyone five minutes to go find a spot to "become" that animal. Imagine how long it lives, where it travels, how other plants and animals look from its perspective. When the students return, ask everyone to write a short poem about their animal. Poems can be free verse or rhyming. Cinquain and haiku are interesting forms. Or, do a group poem. Everyone thinks of one animal. Each person contributes one word. One or more students or the instructor can put all the words together to form the poem while the others discuss their experiences in "becoming" an animal.

NOTE: Students can imagine they "are" their animal, without giving the animal human emotions and falling into the point of view which concerns many scientists, called anthropomorphism.

4. The completed poems can be typed or printed neatly—and then displayed with a photograph or black and white pen and ink drawing of the animal. For example:

The Goat, "Mazama"

Rhime ice coats my nostrils
The gale rages from peak to crag
Warm, white wool shaggily hugging my body. . .
Cautiously I move on rock
Barely noticing the fear
Of the valley below.
The eagle—the feel of snow—
This is my home.

Hal Neace, Teacher
Seldovia, Alaska

Evaluation

If you had to choose between two very comfortable, safe places to live—one with, and one without, wildlife—which one would you choose, and why?

Age: Grades 4—7 (and older)
Subjects: Language Arts, Science
Skills: description, invention, synthesis, visualization, writing
Duration: one class period
Group Size: any
Setting: outdoors
Curriculum Framework Reference: II.A., II.A.1, II.A.3, II.A.4.
Key Vocabulary: poetry, imagine

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STORMY WEATHER

Objective
Students will be able to generalize that humans and wildlife share environments and experience some of the same natural phenomena.

Method
Students go on a "guided imagery" to experience a storm.

Background
This activity is designed for students to experience feelings associated with the recognition that people and wildlife co-exist, and sometimes experience the same natural phenomena. During a storm, for example, most people, pets, and wildlife need to seek shelter.

Materials
none needed

Procedure
Note to Teacher: This activity makes use of an instructional technique called visualization or guided imagery. Brain researchers and learning theorists tell us that the technique provides access to ways of processing information that facilitate long-term memory and comprehension of concepts. As a teacher using this technique, you read or describe in your own words a series of images for your students, with their eyes closed, to conjure in their minds. Leave time between the phrasing of your words for the students to visualize the images you are suggesting. Some teachers use guided imagery techniques as a regular part of each teaching day. It is not necessary to use the technique frequently; however, it is a powerful and helpful instructional tool for both teachers and students.

Age: Grades 4—9 (and older)
Subjects: Language Arts, Science, Social Studies
Skills: comparing similarities and differences, description, generalization, visualization
Duration: 20—40 minutes
Group Size: any
Setting: indoors or outdoors
Curriculum Framework Reference: I.B., I.B.3., I.C.
Key Vocabulary: environment

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1. Provide the students with the following instructions:

"You are to try to imagine the things you will hear me describing. I won't put in all the details—so you must try to see and feel as clearly as you can the things that I describe. Before we begin, I want you to decide *who* you will be during this activity. You may either be yourself, or an animal. If you are an animal, you may either be a wild animal, a pet, or a farm animal. You don't have to *do* anything special if you choose to be an animal. It is just that you will be visualizing things from the point of view of the animal you pick. Any questions? Okay, let's see by a show of hands how many people and how many animals we will have for this activity. How many of you are going to be farm animals? Pets? Wild animals? Yourselves?"

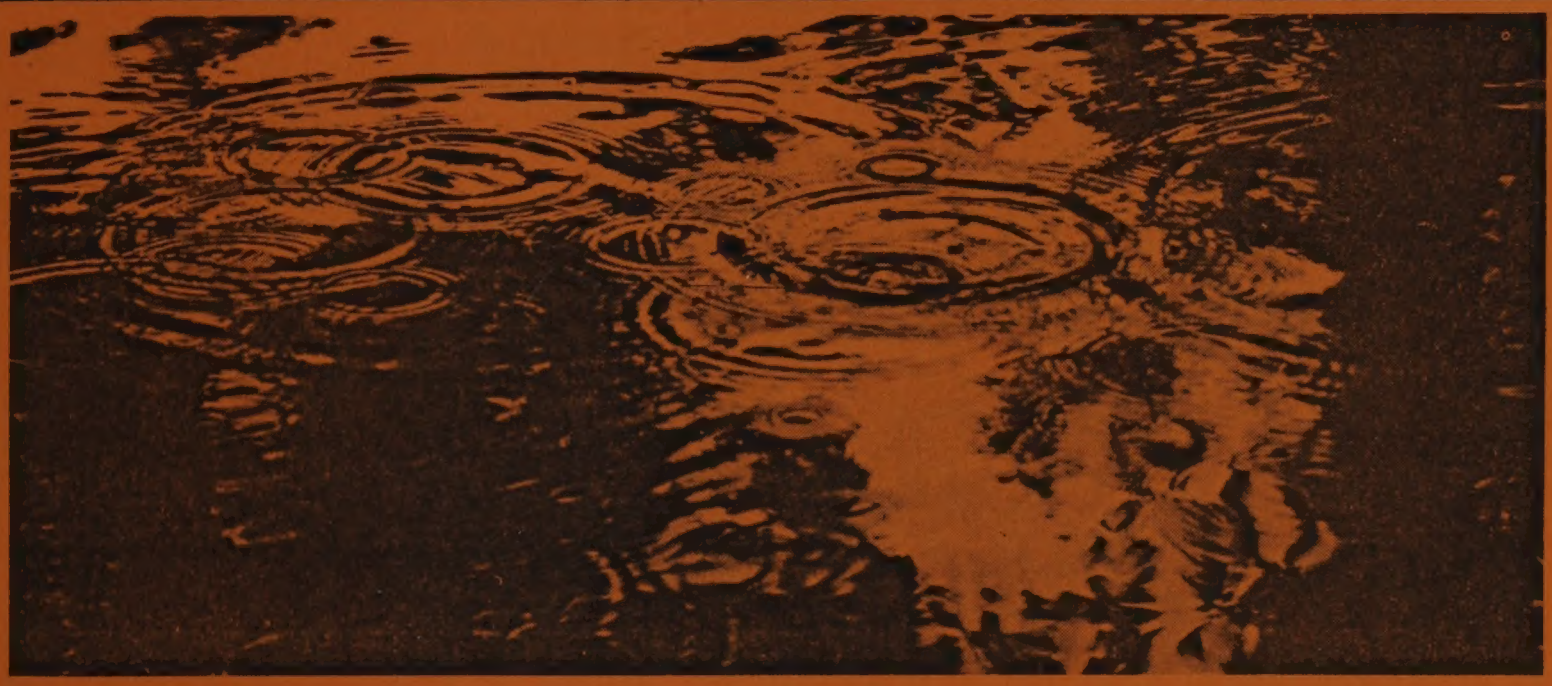
Note to Teacher: You don't want to find out *which* animals the students have selected to be. You only want to be sure that you have some variety—some of them seeing things from their own perspective, some from the perspective of a domesticated animal, and some from the perspective of a wild animal.

Optional: *Grand Canyon Suite* might be played at this point to set the mood and get an idea of the storm, or other music with a "storm" or natural environment theme.

"Now, we are ready to begin. Get yourselves in a comfortable place. Don't worry about who is sitting next to you. All of you will have your eyes closed. Just be comfortable, and do your best to imagine the things I will describe. Okay, close your eyes, and imagine what you hear. . .

It is a late summer's night. There is a coolness in the air. . .You hear the sounds of summer. . . Somehow, you can feel some changes coming in the weather. . .In the distance, the dark sky is broken by bright flashes of lightning. . .The light is far away. . .After a long wait, a rolling rumble is heard. . .The lightning gets closer. . .The rumbles are louder. . . Suddenly, the lightning flashes and lights up the whole sky. . .You need to find shelter, to find a safe place.

The brilliant flashes of lightning pop and crackle all around you. The noise of thunder is crashing so that the earth seems to shake. . .There are no longer times of quiet between the rumbles of thunder and flashes of lightning. . . It becomes still. . .You notice scents in the air, things you can smell and feel. . .You begin to hear a new sound. . .You are not sure what it is. . .You again have to find shelter, if you had come out thinking the storm was gone. . .You need to find a place to stay dry. . .Suddenly, the rain is pouring down with a loud, rich sound. . .It rains, and rains. . .and rains. . .And then stillness. . .The storm has passed."



Note to Teacher: Wait a few seconds, and then tell the students, "Open your eyes."

2. Now it is time to find out what the students saw and felt during the guided imagery. There is no need to hear from every student, nor any reason for them to feel pressured to share. Most often, they are eager to describe what they experienced. Let the students volunteer, being sure to include who they were—that is, wild or domesticated animal of some kind, or themselves. Find out what shelter they found, and where, and what happened to them throughout the storm.
3. After the students have shared their descriptions, turn the discussion to the idea that many creatures—including people, pets, and wildlife—share a common environment. Whether we live in the cities, in the country, in the desert, or on a mountaintop, people are not the only living creatures who live in those environments. Even if we don't see many animals where we live, they are there in some form—from the ant on the sidewalk to the spider in the garden. It is useful to remember that we are not the only inhabitants of our environment. Events like summer storms, a strong wind, and a light or heavy snowfall can all serve as special reminders. Every creature who experienced this imaginary storm experienced some of the same things, although not in exactly the same ways. Any creatures who were out that night likely had to find some kind of protection. Remind the students next time they see the lightning, hear the thunder, and feel the rain . . . to wonder where the birds are, the spiders, the cats and dogs, the fox, and the bear. Where are the other creatures who might be feeling this storm?

Extensions

1. Draw pictures of what you imagined.
2. Pantomime the actions the animals took during the storm.

Evaluation

Write a story that compares the ways a child and an animal might experience any of these: drought, snowstorm, flood, tornado, fire, earthquake.

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OH DEER!

Objectives
Students will be able to: 1) identify and describe food, water, and shelter as three essential components of habitat; 2) describe the importance of good habitat for animals; 3) define "limiting factors" and give examples; and 4) recognize that some fluctuations in wildlife populations are natural as ecological systems undergo a constant change.

Method
Students become "deer" and components of habitat in a highly-involving physical activity.

Background
A variety of factors affects the ability of wildlife to successfully reproduce and to maintain their populations over time. Disease, predator/prey relationships, varying impacts of weather conditions from season to season (e.g., early freezing, heavy snows, flooding, drought), accidents, environmental pollution, and habitat destruction and degradation are among these factors.

Some limiting factors serve to prevent wildlife populations from reproducing in numbers greater than their habitat can support. An excess of such limiting factors, however, leads to threatening, endangering, and eliminating whole species of animals.

The most fundamental of life's necessities for any animal are food, water, shelter, and space in suitable arrangement. Without these essential components, animals cannot survive.

This activity is designed for students to learn that:

a) good habitat is the key to wildlife survival;
b) a population will continue to increase in size until some limiting factors are imposed;
c) limiting factors contribute to fluctuations in wildlife populations; and
d) nature is never in "balance," but is constantly changing.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to understand the importance of good habitat as well as factors that affect wildlife populations in constantly changing ecosystems.

Materials
area—either indoors or outdoors—large enough for students to run; e.g., playing field; chalkboard or flip chart; writing materials

Procedure
1. Begin by telling students that they are about to participate in an activity that emphasizes the most essential things that animals need in order to survive. Review the essential components of habitat with the students: food, water, shelter, and space in a suitable arrangement. This activity emphasizes three of those habitat components—food, water, and shelter—but the students should not forget the importance of the animals having sufficient space in which to live, and that all the components have to be in a suitable arrangement or the animals will die.
2. Ask your students to count off in four's. Have all the one's go to one area; all two's, three's, and

Age: Grades 4—12
Subjects: Science, Math, Social Studies, Physical Education
Skills: application, comparing similarities and differences, description, discussion, generalization, kinesthetic concept development, observation, psychomotor development
Duration: 30—45 minutes
Group size: 15 and larger recommended
Setting: indoors or outdoors; large area for running needed
Curriculum Framework Reference: IV.C., IV.C.1., IV.C.2., III.C., III.C.1., III.C.2., III.E., III.E.1., III.E.2.
Key Vocabulary: habitat, limiting factors, predator, prey, population, balance of nature, ecosystem

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four's go together to another area. Mark two parallel lines on the ground or floor ten to 20 yards apart. Have the one's line up behind one line; the rest of the students line up behind the other line.

3. The one's become "deer." All deer need good habitat in order to survive. Ask the students what the essential components of habitat are again: **food, water, shelter,** and **space in a suitable arrangement.** For the purposes of this activity, we will assume that the deer have enough space in which to live. We are emphasizing food, water, and shelter. The deer (the one's) need to find food, water, and shelter in order to survive. When a deer is looking for **food,** it should clamp its hands over its stomach. When it is looking for **water,** it puts its hands over its mouth. When it is looking for **shelter,** it holds its hands together over its head. A deer can choose to look for any one of its needs during each round or segment of the activity; **the deer cannot, however, change what it is looking for;** e.g., when it sees what is available, **during that round. It can change again what it is looking for in the next round, if it survives.**

4. The two's, three's, and four's are food, water, and shelter—components of habitat. Each student gets to choose at the beginning of each round which component he or she will be during that round. The students depict which component they are in the same way the deer show what they are looking for; that is, hands on stomach for food, etc.

5. The game starts with all players lined up on their respective lines (deer on one side; habitat components on the other side)—and **with their backs to the students at the other line.**

6. The facilitator or teacher begins the first round by asking all of the students to make their signs—each deer deciding what it is looking for, each habitat component deciding what it is. Give the students a few moments to get their hands in place—over stomachs, mouths, or over their heads. (As you look at the two lines of students, you will normally see a lot of variety—with some students water, some food, some shelter. As the game proceeds, sometimes the students confer with each other and all make the same sign. That's okay, although don't encourage it. For example, all the students in habitat might decide

to be shelter. That could represent a drought year with no available food or water.)

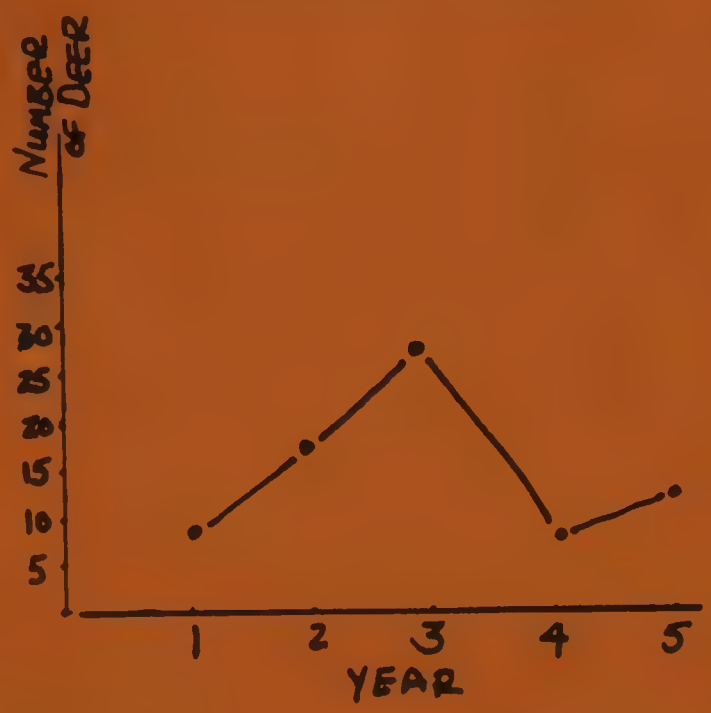
7. When you can see that the students are ready, count: "One. . . two. . . three." At the count of three, each deer and each habitat component turn to face the opposite group, continuing to hold their signs clearly.

8. When deer see the habitat component they need, they are to run to it. Each deer must hold the sign of what it is looking for until getting to the habitat component person with the same sign. Each deer that reaches its necessary habitat component takes the "food," "water," or "shelter" back to the deer side of the line. This is to represent the deer's successfully meeting its needs, and successfully reproducing as a result. Any deer that fails to find its food, water, or shelter dies and becomes part of the habitat. That is, in the next round, the deer that died is a habitat component and so is available as food, water, or shelter to the deer who are still alive. NOTE: When more than one deer reaches a habitat component, the student who gets there first survives. Habitat components stay in place on their line until a deer needs them. If no deer needs a particular habitat component during a round, the habitat component just stays where it is in the habitat. The habitat person can, however, change which component it is from round to round.

9. You as the facilitator or teacher keep track of how many deer there are at the beginning of the game, and at the end of each round you record the number of deer also. Continue the game for approximately 15 rounds. Keep the pace brisk, and the students will thoroughly enjoy it.

10. At the end of the 15 rounds, gather the students together to discuss the activity. Encourage them to talk about what they experienced and saw. For example, they saw a small herd of deer (seven students in a class size of 28) begin by finding more than enough of its habitat needs. The population of deer expanded over two to three rounds of the game, until the habitat was depleted and there was not sufficient food, water, and shelter for all the members of the herd. At that point, deer starved or died of thirst or lack of shelter, and they returned as part of the habitat. Such things happen in nature also.

11. Using a flip chart pad or an available chalkboard, post the data recorded during the game. The number of deer at the beginning of the game and at the end of each round represent the number of deer in a series of years. That is, the beginning of the game is year one; each round is an additional year. Deer can be posted by five's for convenience. For example:



The students will see this visual reminder of what they experienced during the game: the deer population fluctuated over a period of years. This is a natural process, as long as the factors which limit the population do not become excessive, to the point where the animals cannot successfully reproduce. The wildlife populations will tend to peak and rebuild, peak and rebuild, as long as there is good habitat and sufficient numbers of animals to successfully reproduce.

12. In discussion, ask the students to summarize some of the things they have learned from this activity. What do animals need to survive? What are some of the "limiting factors" that affect their survival? Are wildlife populations static, or do they tend to fluctuate, as part of an overall "balance of nature?" Is nature ever really in "balance," or are ecological systems involved in a process of constant change?

Extensions

1. When you have finished tabulating the graph data and discussing it, ask the students if they have ever heard of the Hudson Bay trappers in American history. Tell them, briefly, who they were.

There is a hundred years, or more, of records of the activities of these trappers. In those records are some interesting data. These data refer to pelts shipped from America to Europe, particularly the pelts of snowshoe hares and lynx.

Researchers have found that snowshoe hare populations seem to peak about every seven to nine years and then crash, repeating the process

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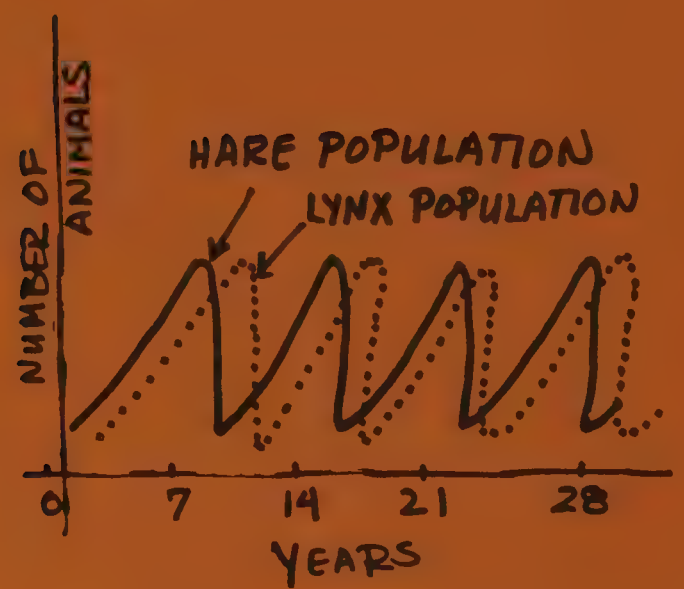
over each comparable time period. So, a snowshoe hare population graph would look like this:

It has also been discovered that lynx populations do the same thing—except that they do it one year behind the hare populations. The combined graph would look like this:



Graph this right over the deer graph that you made, adding first the hares, and then the lynx. Ask the students:

- Which animal is the predator? Which prey?
- Are predators controlling the prey, or are prey controlling the predators? (We have been brought up to "know" that predators control the prey—and are now discovering that this is not so. The number of prey animals available tells us how many predators can live in the area.)
- Is this like the deer habitat game we just played? Who controls? (Sometimes the habitat—when the deer population is not too large; sometimes the habitat—when the deer population "gets on top of it" and destroys the vegetative food and cover.)

2. Some recent research has added a new dimension to the story of the snowshoe hares and the lynx.

It has been found that the major food of the hare is a small willow. As hare populations grow, the use of the willow plants grows too. But, when the willow plant has been "hedged" or eaten back so far, the plant generates a toxin (poison) which precludes use by the hare. That is when the hare population crashes, followed by the crash of the lynx population about a year later. Then the willow, relieved of pressure, begins to grow again. The hare population begins to grow in response, and last of all, within a year or so, the lynx population follows. And the cycle has begun again—over and over—every seven to nine years.

Discuss the "balance of nature." Is it ever in "balance?"

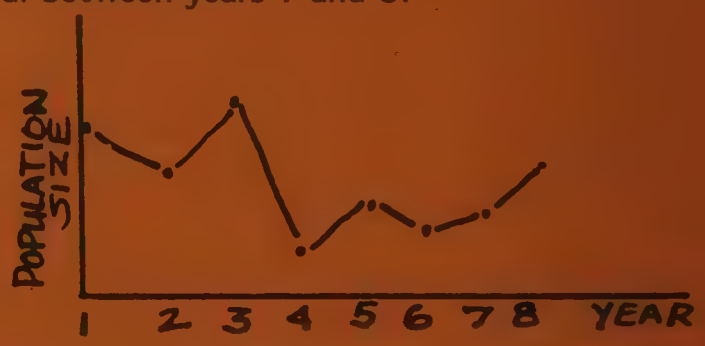
Evaluation

Name three essential components of habitat.

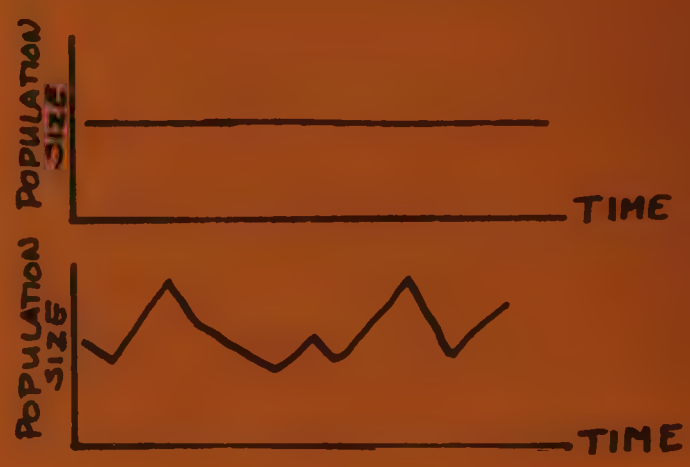
Define "limiting factors." Give three examples.

Examine the graph. What factors may have caused the following population changes:

a. between years 1 and 2?
b. between years 3 and 4?
c. between years 5 and 6?
d. between years 7 and 8?



Which of the following graphs represents the more typically balanced population?



ETHI-REASONING

Objectives

Students will be able to: 1) examine their own values and beliefs related to wildlife and other elements of the environment; and 2) evaluate possible actions they might take that have impact on wildlife and the environment.

Method

Students read, discuss, make judgements,. and write about hypothetical dilemmas concerning wildlife and/or natural resources.

Background

This activity is designed to give students the opportunity to examine their own values and beliefs as they relate to wildlife and other elements of the environment. It is not the intent of this activity to prescribe "right" and "wrong" answers for the students, except in the areas where information about laws is conveyed. It is the major purpose of this activity to provide students with an opportunity to come to their own judgements about what they think would be the most responsible and appropriate actions to take in each situation that is described.

Materials

copies of "dilemma cards"

Procedure

1. From the attached pages the teacher should copy and cut up the dilemma cards. Other dilemmas could be written that are more specific to problems in your area. Students could also be involved in the process of creating the dilemma cards, with each student responsible for one card.
2. Divide the class into groups of four, and give each group a stack of dilemma cards. Place them face down at the center of the group.
3. The first player draws a card from the top of the stack. The player has two minutes to study the situation, decide what he or she would do, and formulate his or her reasons.
4. When the allotted two minutes is up, the player reads the situation and the options aloud to the rest of the group. The student gives the decision he or she has chosen, and briefly describes the reasoning involved.
5. Without consultation, the other players decide to what degree each agrees with the first player's answer. Rating is done on a scale ranging from zero through ten points with zero representing total disagreement with the decision and ten representing total agreement. A rating of five would be given when the rater is uncertain of his or her opinion, indifferent to the player's decision, or feels more information is needed. (Additional information needed should be specified.)
6. Each of the players, in turn, announces how he or she has rated the first player's decision and the reasons for their views. This part of the activity should be limited to five minutes. The person whose response is being discussed should have the opportunity to ask questions and offer clarification. The rating is not to represent any kind of judgement of the person; it does give the students experience in having ideas examined by peers, and is intended to remind the students of the need to take personal responsibility for decision-making. It is not necessary and may not be desirable for the students to reach consensus; there are legitimately ranging views of the most appropriate and responsible actions to take in many situations. The purpose is to provide students with an opportunity to examine, express, clarify, and take responsibility for their own reasoning.
7. The card is then returned to the bottom of the stack and the next player selects a card from the top of the deck. Continue this process until all students have had the opportunity to express their decision and rationale about a dilemma.

Age: Grades 5—12
Subjects: Social Studies, Science, Language Arts
Skills: analysis, application, discussion, evaluation, problem-solving, small group work, synthesis, writing
Duration: one 30—45-minute period
Group Size: any; small groups of two to four students recommended
Setting: indoors or outdoors
Curriculum Framework Reference: VII.A., VII.A.1., VII.A.2., VII.A.3., VII.A.4., VII.B., VII.B.1., VII.B.2., VII.B.3., VII.B.4., VII.B.7.
Key Vocabulary: dilemma, responsibility

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Dilemma Card

You have been issued a once in a lifetime bighorn sheep permit and have spent two months scouting an area before the season. You have seen a ram that is record size. The season opens and you can't find the big sheep. You hunt the entire season, and on the last afternoon of the hunt you see a very good ram. Realizing this could be your last chance for a sheep, you shoot the ram. Suddenly, the large ram walks out of a ravine 50 yards away. Do you:

- ignore it and start cleaning the smaller ram
- shoot the big ram and leave the smaller ram for the coyotes
- shoot the big ram and bury the smaller ram
- take a picture of the big ram and keep the smaller ram
- shoot the big ram, cut its head off and hide it, to get the dried skull in the spring and say you found it
- other

Dilemma Card

You are president of a large corporation. You are very interested in pollution control and have had a task force in the company reviewing the pollution your plant is creating. The task force reports that you are barely within the legal requirements, but are adding more than your share of pollution to the community. To add the necessary equipment to reduce pollution would cost so much that you would have to fire 50 employees. Do you:

- add the equipment and fire the employees
- not add the equipment
- wait a few years to see if the cost of the equipment will drop
- other

Dilemma Card

You are a member of a country club that has recently voted to build a game farm to raise animals for members to hunt. You are not a hunter, you think that hunting is only okay to do in the wild, and you are opposed to the building of the game farm. Do you:

- stay in the club and do nothing
- stay in the club and speak out strongly against the project
- resign from the club
- other

Dilemma Card

You are fishing at a secluded lake and have caught seven fish during your first day at the lake. Now, on the second day, the fishing has been great and you have caught five fish in the first hour, all of which are bigger than yesterday's fish. The law allows you to possess 12 fish. Do you:

- continue to fish and keep all the fish
- continue to fish and keep only the biggest ones you catch today, to stay within your limit
- dispose of the smaller fish you caught yesterday and keep the big ones to stay within your limit
- have fish for lunch
- other

Dilemma Card

You are head of a task force created to select the best course of action to attempt to preserve the California condor. There are 22 condors left in a steadily declining population. Left to their own, it is probable they will all die. Some members of your task force would like you to authorize capturing some of the condors and sending them to zoos to try to propagate them in captivity. Do you:

- leave them in their natural environment
- capture some of them for zoos
- other

Dilemma Card

You are finally able to build the home your family has dreamed about. After reviewing the plans for your home, you realize that you cannot include all of the features you had planned for, due to rising construction costs. You must decide which one of the following you will include:

- solar heating
- recreation room with fireplace
- swimming pool
- hot tub and sauna
- other

Dilemma Card

You love children and would like to have a large family. You are aware, however, of the world's population projections for the future. Do you:

- plan to have a large family anyway
- decide not to have children
- limit yourself to one or two children
- other

Dilemma Card

You have found a young screech owl which you have managed to raise to maturity. You cannot keep the owl any longer in your apartment. Do you:

- offer it to your local zoo
- release it back into the wild
- keep it as a pet
- call the fish and game department and ask their advice
- other

Dilemma Card

You are walking in the woods and come upon a young fawn. There is no sign of the fawn's mother. Do you:

- leave it where it is
- move it to a sheltered area
- take it home
- other

Dilemma Card

You are deer hunting with a friend when you spot a hawk perched on a high limb. Before you realize what is happening, your friend shoots the hawk. An hour later, you are leaving the woods and are approached by a game warden, who tells you a hawk has been illegally shot and asks if you know anything about it. Do you:

- deny any knowledge of the incident
- admit your friend did it
- make up a story implicating someone else
- say nothing, but call up later with an anonymous phone tip
- other

Dilemma Card

You have purchased a beautiful ten acre property in the mountains to build a summer home. One hillside of the property has a beautiful view of valley and lake below and is your choice for your homesite. However, you discover there is an active bald eagle nest site on that hillside. The bald eagle is sensitive to disturbance around its nest tree and is a protected species. Bald eagles are highly selective in choosing nest sites and usually return to the same nest year after year. Do you:

- select a different site on the property to build your home
- sell the property
- chop down the tree and build your home
- other

Dilemma Card

You are on a field trip with your class to the zoo. Although you know that feeding of the animals by zoo visitors is prohibited, some of your friends are feeding marshmallows to the bears. Do you:

- tell them that feeding marshmallows to the bear may harm it and ask them to stop
- report their behavior to the nearest keeper
- ask the teacher to ask them to stop
- not do anything
- other

Dilemma Card

You are the judge in a case where a man has been charged with shooting a deer out of season. He has been unemployed and is using the meat to feed his family. Do you:

- give him the maximum punishment and put him in prison for nine months
- fine him $500
- release him with a warning
- other

Dilemma Card

You are an influential member of the community. On your way home from work, you are stopped by a police officer, and cited for having excessive auto emissions. Do you:

- use your influence to have the ticket invalidated
- sell the car to some unsuspecting person
- work to change the law
- get your car fixed and pay the ticket
- other

Extensions and Variations

1. Adapt this to a debate format!
2. Write and discuss your own dilemmas!

Evaluation

Choose a dilemma. Write a short paragraph on the positive and negative effects of all the options listed for that dilemma. Indicate what additional information, if any, is needed in order to make a responsible and informed decision. Identify what seems, in your judgement, to be the most responsible decision—and explain your reasoning.

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DOES WILDLIFE SELL CIGARETTES?

Objectives

Students will be able to: 1) identify use of wildlife and other natural images in advertising; 2) critically analyze and evaluate the purposes and impacts of use of such images in advertising; and 3) recommend appropriate uses of such nature-derived images in advertising.

Method

Students evaluate and categorize advertisements.

Background

A cowboy boot manufacturer ran a series of advertisements for its boots showing boot and wearers in conflict with wildlife. In this particular case, the wearer of the boot is about to kill a rattlesnake and a scorpion. There is a sense of drama in the ads—with the boot raised in the air, ready to flatten the offenders. The advertisement portrays a person in battle with forces of nature, and plays on the stereotype that some sort of virtuous strengths might accompany such actions. It also plays on the stereotype that some animals are worthless and should be killed.

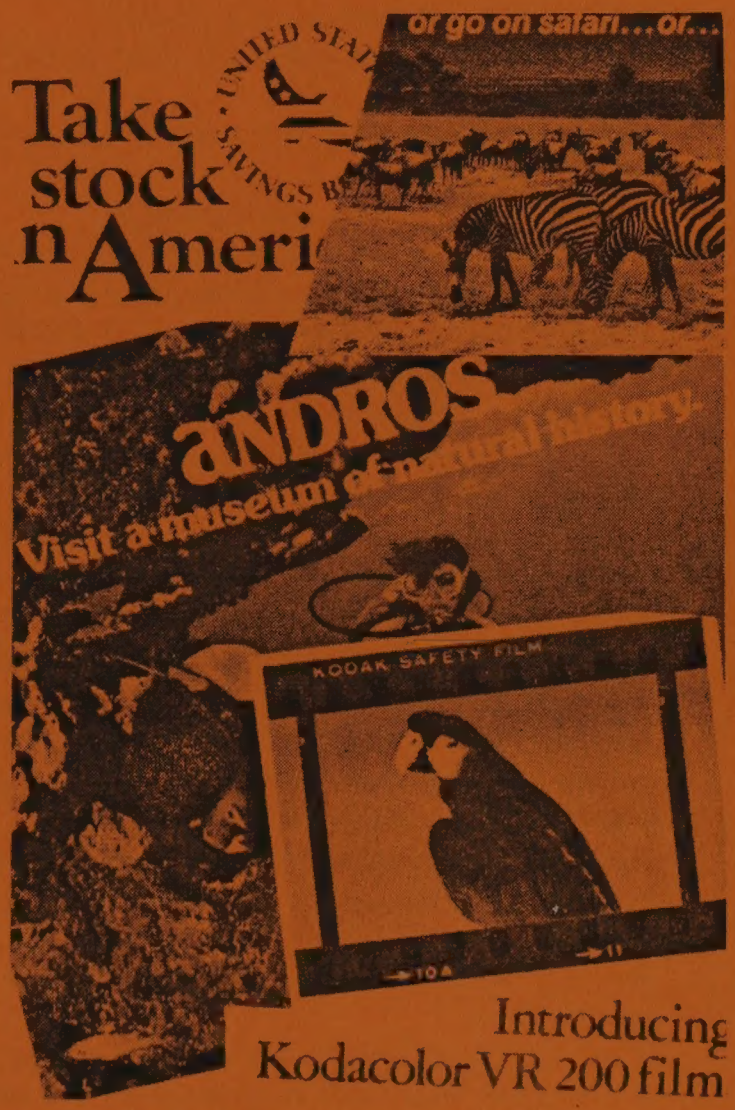
In contrast with the images chosen by this advertiser, the rattlesnake and the scorpion could be portrayed as integral components of natural ecosystems in the western United States. The lustre and patterning of the snake's scales, and the grace in motion of both of the animals could be portrayed. Fewer boots would likely be sold—since the marketplace may still be steeped in too many stereotypes of such animals for the fears the first ad plays upon to be quieted. One could imagine, however, the kind of advertising campaign that an Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard, or Ansel Adams might design.

A substantial amount of contemporary advertising exploits people's biases and emotional responses to elements of nature. Advertising, by design, is intended to evoke a response—usually one that will lead to some action, as in buying the advertised product.

The major purpose of this activity is for students to evaluate the uses and impacts of nature-derived images in advertising.

Materials

magazines or newspapers as a source of advertisements



Age: Grades 6-12
Subjects: Language Arts (Communication, Media, Semantics), Social Studies, Business Education
Skills: analysis, classification, discussion, evaluation, observation, reading
Duration: two 45-minute periods
Group size: any
Setting: indoors
Curriculum Framework Reference: V.A., V.A.1., V.A.2., V.A.3., V.A.4., V.A.5., V.A.6., V.B., V.B.1.
Key Vocabulary: stereotype, metaphor, advertising

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Procedure

1. Ask each student to find at least one advertisement that makes use of some aspect of the natural environment in order to sell its product. The advertisement might show crystal waters, an eagle soaring the skies, an elk standing majestically, a forested hillside, snow-capped peaks, etc. Bring the advertisement to class. If the advertisement is on a billboard, perhaps the student can bring in a photo; if it is from a television commercial, a sketch and/or description will work. NOTE: The teacher may want to establish a file of such advertisements, laminating and keeping them for future use.
2. Working in small groups of two to four, ask the students to examine their advertisements according to questions such as the following:
- What is the advertiser's purpose?
- What image from nature is used to sell the product?
- Does the image have any direct relationship to the product?
- If yes, what is that relationship?
- If no, what purpose does the image serve for the advertiser in attempting to sell the product?
- What feelings, if any, does the ad elicit?
- What stereotypes, if any, does the ad encourage or build upon?
- If not a stereotype based on people's reactions to the image portrayed, does the ad portray a metaphor as a means to sell its product? If yes, describe its purpose. For example, a porcupine might be pictured alongside an electric shaver with, "Get rid of the bristles." The porcupine's quills serve as a metaphor for a stubbly beard.
- Does the advertisement seem to portray the natural image in a realistic way? Describe what seems realistic and what doesn't.
- Identify and describe any ways in which the ad might contribute to practices that could be wasteful, destructive, inappropriate, etc., in terms of wise use of natural resources and the environment.

3. According to criteria the students establish and explain, ask them to categorize the advertisements as appropriate or inappropriate means by which to attempt to sell products.

Extensions

1. For advertisements considered inappropriate; e.g., harmful or misleading, the students could:
a) redesign the advertisement to make it more appropriate in their judgement;
b) write a letter to the advertising company explaining their concerns;
c) write a letter to the managing editor of the magazine or newspaper in which the ad appeared;
d) write an editorial about the ad for a city or school paper; and
e) call other people's attention to the ad and the students' reasons for concern.
2. For advertisements considered appropriate; e.g., constructive or accurate, the students could:
a) write a letter to the advertising company in praise of the ad, explaining the bases for the students' opinions, etc.; and b) call other people's attention to the ad and the students' reasons for praise.
3. Design advertisements to encourage wise use of natural resources, and responsible actions toward people, wildlife and the environment. Send these ideas to the advertising departments of companies that would seem most able to benefit from them with courteous letters of concern and explanation.

Evaluation

Describe two examples of advertisements which portray animals in informative, accurate, or positive ways. Describe two examples of advertisements which portray animals in inaccurate, misleading, or negative ways.

How, if at all, does the use of wildlife help the image advertisers wish to portray?

How, if at all, do the ways wildlife are used in advertising help wildlife? Harm wildlife?

Describe a way that advertisers could use wildlife to the best advantage of both wildlife and the advertisers.

Describe what you believe would be the most responsible and appropriate ways to include wildlife in advertising, if at all.

For more information contact

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